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# Jesus' Attitude Towards the Old Law

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Outline.

## Jesus' Attitude Toward the Law

Jesus "came not to destroy, but to fulfil" the Law. (Mt. 5:17) Yet in an age when the Law was the dominant aspect of religious life he found hostility among those who were recognized propagators of the Law. Out of the conflict a new religion rose and separated itself from the old legalistic order. A new spirit of enthusiasm, a new power took hold of it, which slowly permeated a large portion of the civilized world. Its influence has revolutionized governments and industrial orders, and has created new social enterprizes. It is the purpose of this study to discover Jesus' real attitude toward the old Law, to seek the clash between his view of the Law and that of his contemporaries, to find the points of agreement and disagreement, and to determine those characteristic qualities which marked the religion of his origin from that of Moses.

Many have written upon the subject. The original sources are well exhausted. At best this paper can contribute nothing new except in the way

of reorganization and realignment of the material in hand. The study is a personal attempt on the part of the author to gain the truth for himself.

## I THE LAW OF MOSES IN THE TIME OF JESUS.

### Factions Among the Jews

Any effort to see Jesus' attitude toward the old Law apart from the political and religious factions of his time would be futile, though he probably never affiliated with any of them. There were at least four distinct parties among the Jews of that time: The Essenses, Zealots, Pharisees, and Sadducees. Each group had its particular school of philosophy and interpretation of the Law. To generalize upon the current Jewish views is likely to be unjust to one group or another without first a brief explanation of their differences.

The Essenses, or "Essae", were so-called "because of their saintliness".* A group of "worshipers of God",** tired of the strife and evils of the public life, withdrew to rural districts, and

* Hasting's Bible Dictionary I:768.
** Ibid I: 768

organized themselves into colonies managed upon the communistic plan. There they followed the single life, seeking purification and avoiding defilement. They did not believe in animal sacrifices which were bloody * for a "reverent mind was enough".** They believed in the equality and fraternity of man to such a degree that they were "indifferent to money, worldly pleasure, or position." *** For their rules of conduct they followed the national laws of the Jews. They were so peace-loving and law-abiding that Philo observed: "The most cruel and deceitful tyrants that had been the scourage of their country, had yet been moved to admiration of their quiet but invincible freedom, of their common meals, of their consummate fellowship." **** Herod gave them special recognition and favor. In their "prohibition of all oaths"***** and all work on the Sabbath and their celibate life they were ascetic. Otherwise they followed a very wholesome and practical philosophy.

* Wendt, Teachings of Jesus I: 55
** Hastings' Bible Dictionary I: 768
*** Ibid I: 769
**** Ibid I: 769
***** Ibid I: 769
Cf. Philo, "Quod Probus Liber", #13, Moffatt, "Essenes", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, V: 397.

On the extreme radical flank were the Zealots who were marked by their bitterness toward Roman domination. They first sprung to action, under the leadership of Judas of Gamala, A. D. 6 or 7, in "opposition to the census of Quirinius."* Their one ambition for the coming of the Messiah was that he would establish a powerful Kingdom and overthrow the Roman sovereignty. If Jesus had undertaken a kingdom of this nature, he could have found loyal supporters among the Zealots, for they were ready to fight with the sword.

The party which was primarily interested in politics was composed of the Sadducees or Zadokites. Although descended from the priestly tribe, they entered the service of the new regime both as soldiers and as diplomatists and made a conscious effort to Hellenize the Palestinian Jews.** It was not until Jesus interfered with the prerogative set by the Sanhedrin in the Temple, by driving out the money changers that they were concerned about him one way or another. When people began calling him the "Son of David"*** they feared that such a Messiah would overthrow their own political power.

* Ibid I;348
** Hastings Bible Dictionary III 823
*** Ibid III 823

In spite of the political supremacy of the Sadducees, the most influential group were the Pharisees. "In order to render themselves tolerable to the people, the Sadducees were compelled to act in most matters in accordance with Pharisaic principles." * The Pharisees made it their task to keep the Jewish religion and traditions pure and protected from foreign infiltrations. A separation and aloofness from other people resulted, as a means to this end. They advocated obedience to the law in the most minute detail, which was impossible except through their interpretation of the law. As against the Sadducees their belief was characterized by the doctrine of the bodily resurrection, divine providence, freedom of the will, angels and spirits and future retribution, by their Messianic expectations, and by their exclusive attitude toward people not of their race and religion. They were conscious of the fact that Judaism as a national religion depended upon them, and they were very precise in exercising that responsibility. Had it not been for some consciencious Pharisees much of the rich Jewish culture might have perished.

* Hastings' Bible Dictionary IV 349

Until recent times it has been characteristic of Christian writers to underestimate the Pharisee and his contribution to civilization. Naturally enough those who turned their backs upon the Pharisees and became Christians were anxious to defend their position. This they did by calling attention to all the possible defects in Pharisaism and at the same time by extoling the merits of Christianity. From the Gospel writers and Paul one can all too easily get a distorted view of the Pharisee. Generalizations were easy to make then as now. The Christian New Testament interpreter is apt to infer from the certain Pharisee who went into the temple to pray that prayer did not mean more for any Pharisee than a display of self-righteousness before the eyes of men. * Anyone who is acquainted with the current Jewish writings of Jesus' time knows that such general inferences are erronious. The Pharisees were not all "hypocrites", nor "blind guides", ** nor teachers of iniquity any more than Christian ministers are today. Many of them did get real good from prayer and from the exact performance of their numerous acts of piety. Many were devout and sincere in

* Luke 18:9-14
** Matthew 18:13-31

their attempt to develop personal character and to glorify God. "To say that 'Our Father in Heaven' meant for the Pharisee only that God had chosen Israel to be His own people, and that the name Father 'did not in the Jewish theology lead to a deeper insight into the nature of God as Love' is a" flagrant misrepresentation.* God was both universal and national, individual and personal to certain of the Pharisees. "The devout Jew of that period believed that God was the Lord of all worlds, the one Holy, Wise, Just and Godd, the Sovereign Ruler of all mankind. ------- He prayed to God as 'Our Father and Our King', and does so to the present day, because both terms have a meaning in which he can find satisfaction for real spiritual needs." ** It is clear in the minds of most modern thinkers that the Pharisees as a body were worthy of a higher appraisal than that which early Christian writers gave them. At their chosen task of keeping intact and free from foreign infiltrations the Jewish faith in God they worked religiously. In spite of the intermingling of races and cults which took

* Herford, R.T., Pharisaism Its Aim and Method, 125

** Herford, R.T., Judaism in the New Testament Period, p 92.

place at that time and other great difficulties which attended them, they succeeded in maintaining their national, racial, and religious distinction even among the Jews of the Dispersion. In their traditions of the Scribes, which accompanied the Torah, they contributed considerable to the conceptual development of religion. Doubtless the leading Scribes were in advance of the Law of Moses in their thinking.

Pharisaical Ecclesiasticism Versus Prophetism.

Nevertheless, having recognized the good work of the Pharisees, one must admit also an element of truth in the charges which Jesus and his followers brought against them. Their mission necessitated an ecclesiasticism which grew counter to prophetism. To maintain apure religious stock among the many foreign cults they were forced to a separateness from the masses of population. The name Pharisee means "separateness". "Probably it was their enemies who first called them Perushim; their own designation was Haberim (brethern)." * They were

* Fairweather, The Background of the Gospels, p 138.

the most pious Jews of their time "and in them ecclesiastical piety reached its full maturity." * "A body of Jews who profess to be more religious than the rest and to explain the laws more precisely (Bell. Jud. 1:5,2) describes them as they appeared to an outside observer who had ample opportunity of acquaintance with them in the days of Herod. " **

Of course many could and did wear the Pharisaical garb and perform all the meticulous acts of piety without losing sight of the more human values; but the tendency of the whole system was towards a deadening, ecclesiastical formalism and away from the living, personal, spiritual faith which had characterized the prophets. As over against the personal God to whom Moses and the prophets spoke they thought of Him as too far removed from anything pertaining to man to call by the name "God." It became unholy to speak His name except in terms of "heaven" or some other remote suggestion of His might. For the most part, though there were marked exceptions as stated above, they conceived God

* Ibid, p 143.
** Moore, Judaism, I:66.

as One who was transcendent, super-mundane, almighty, judicious: "a glorified martinet, demanding meticulous obedience to law, but without the inspiration of a great spiritual enterprise." * The prophetic God of righteousness was subordinated in their zeal to keep their God theologically pure and supreme above the mythical gods of the heathen races. **

As such there was not much tendenness in their conception of God. *** He was a God of love so far as His chosen race was concerned, to be sure, but the idea of love was subordinate to that of justice. **** "The religious relation between God and His people was a legal one, upheld by God as a righteous Judge, in the way of service and counterservice, reward and punishment." ***** God loved all the people of Israel. Yet each received his just reward or punishment according to his obedience to the law. ******

The result of this estrangement from God was an emphasis upon ceremonies and rituals in direct contrast to the teachings of the prophets. ******* (Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21f; Isaiah 1:10-15) For the most part the Jews were anxious to remain in

* Knudson, The Doctrine of God, p 341.
** Wendt, The Teachings of Jesus, I, 39.
*** Walker, The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Age, 41.
**** Ibid, 42.
***** Wendt, The Teachings of Jesus, I, 39.
****** Cf. T. Jos. 11:2 quoted by Walker, The Teachings of Jesus, 44.
******* Wendt, The Teachings of Jesus, I, 45-47.

Divine favor as much as possible. But laws were cold, ceremonies formal, and rituals of little help. God was too exalted above the earth to be much interested in individual problems, so far as the masses were concerned. They went through their religious practices in a mechanical fashion, doing no more nor any less than the strict letter of the Law demanded. "Ritual offences were regarded as more grievous than moral ones." * Any one, for instance, who was not circumcised exactly eight days after his birth was doomed to destruction. He could not be one of the covenant; he was unclean. The sin was unpardonable. But to be circumcised in the prescribed way and upon the right day fitted one to keep company with God and the angels. ** The inside of hollow earthen vessels were unclean, until they were broken into bits; the outside was clean. A flat or level platter was clean. Each little article which human hands touched was designated as either clean or unclean. The cheek plates of a horse's bridal wereclean, for instance, while the bit was unclean. Rules for the cleansing of

* Oesterley, W.O.E., and G.H. Box, The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue, p 232.
** Walker, The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Age.,p 244.

every unclean thing were given in their Law of customs and followed scrupulously. * Repentance and reformation were supposed to follow or accompany ceremonial cleansing. Fasting and prayer found a regular place in their routine. "It is good", said one of their writers, "to go morning, midday, and evening into the Lord's dwelling, for the glory of your Creator." ** Unquestionable the more devout Jews entered into these ceremonies whole heartedly and reaped certain value from them. Indeed salvation seemed to be related to ceremonial sacrifice in a very unique sense. The Scribes pretty generally agreed that "he who brings sacrifice of clean beasts, cures his own soul." *** The all important matter was the ceremony.

Jesus found in his day, then, not the warm spirited religious enthusiasm of prophetic character, nor close intimacy with a personal God, but a cold system of ceremonies performed in a mechanical way to appease a transcendent Judge of the universe. Religion had lost much of its ethical content. "It was a time when in Rome the domestic integrity

* Cf. Herford, Judaism in the New Testament Period. Also, Fairweather, The Background of the Bible.

** Walker, The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Age, p 256.

*** Ibid, p 244.

which had been the foundation of the State was corrupted by ostentation and extravagence; a time when in Judea the teachings of Scriptures were being learnedly interpreted so as to permit the very license which they were to forbid." * This does not mean a condemnation of the Pharisees. Many were devout and earnest. But it remains true that from Jesus' point of view there was something lacking in their whole system. That which their system lacked he gave in his own unique, dynamic personality and in his shift of emphasis from law to love.

Various Conceptions of the Torah.

There were as many different views of the meaning and proper use of the Torah as there were factions among the Jews. ** Indeed the term seemed more or less plastic in its meaning, for even a single group. *** In one sense the Torah referred to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, which included what they held to be the original Law, given to Moses through divine revelation. Yet, divine revelation was not limited

* Peabody, F.G., Jesus Christ and the Social Question, p 158.

** Moore, Judaism I,68. Also, Schurer, A History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ, Div. II, Vol.II, 34,312.

*** Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, 121.

to the Pentateuch. "The Torah is a triad, composed of Pentateuch, Prophets, and Hagiographa!" (Tan., B., 2:37a.)* "Notwithstanding this combination of the Nebiim and Kethubim with the (original) Torah, they were never placed quite on a level with it. The Torah always occupied a higher position as to its religious estimation. In it was deposited and fully contained the original revelation of the Divine will. In the Prophets and other sacred writings this will of God was only further delivered. Hence they are designated as 'tradition' and cited as such. ------- In general, however, the Nebiim and Kethubiim participate in the properties of the Torah." ** For the average Jew the term Torah had a broad application, meaning "a teaching or an instruction of any kind," *** as well as the narrow application to the Pentateuch or even to the "triad".

The solemn dignity accorded to the Law dates from the day on which Ezra read it to the people of Israel (Neh. 8-10) engaging them to obey it. "The Law which was then read, was the Pentateuch in essentially the same form as we have it. ------

* Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, p 121.
** Schurer, History of the Jewish People, 310-11.
*** Schechter, Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology 117.

Henceforward, then, the Law given by God through Moses was acknowledged by the people as the binding rule of life, i.e., as canonical." * "The fact most essentially conclusive for the religious life of the Jewish people during the period of consideration is, that the Law, which regulated not only the priestly service but the whole life of the people in their religious, moral, and social relations, was acknowleged as given by God Himself ---- its most scrupulous observance was therefore a religious duty, nay the supreme and in truth the sole religious duty." **

The Pharisees and Sadducees differed sharply upon the value of tradition. "Scripture is the only authority, said the Sadducees. Scripture and Tradition, said the Pharisees." *** While both generally agreed that the revelation of the Divine will was complete in the written Torah, the Pharisaical Scribes thought that it needed to be interpreted so as to fit new needs of the changing social order. Therefore they developed an "Oral Law" to supplement the written Torah. This took two forms principally: The Halachah, or "Law of Custom",

* Schurer, History of the Jewish People, Div.II, Vol.I, 306-307.
** Ibid, 306.
*** Moore, Judaism, I,68. Cf Schurer, History of the Jewish People, Div.II, Vol.II, 34.

included that which was "current and customary"; * and the Haggadah or Agadah was narrative or legend containing imaginative developments of thought suggested by the text, or other homiletical exposition of the Scribes. ** Both the Halachah and the Haggadah differed widely from the Scriptures. Nevertheless "the fiction was still kept up, that it (Halachah) was in reality nothing else than an exposition and more precise statement of the Torah itself." *** It was even more binding, therefore, than the Torah itself. **** Josephus was led to remark,"'The Pharisees have imposed upon the people many laws taken from the tradition of the fathers which are not written in the law of Moses.'" (Autt. XIII, 10:6) ***** Thus developed a legalistic system so complicated with minute details that it must have baffled learned scholars, while for the layman it was a hopeless labyrinth.

Summary.

The Law of Moses in the time of Jesus was, therefore, not a clearly defined set of rules and

* Schurer, History of the Jewish People, Div. II, Vol.I, p 330.
** Ibid, 330.
*** Ibid, 335.
**** Ibid, 334.
***** Ibid, Div. II, Vol.II, p 11.

documents. The Pentateuch contained the original Law of Moses. But the writings of the prophets and the Hagiographa, which were also inspired by the Divine will, and the tradition of the Elders, or the Oral Law, the Pharisees considered also legitimate contributions to the Law of Moses. While the original Law was held in higher estimation, the supplementary material was quite as binding. The Sadducees and perhaps the Essenes and Zealots differed somewhat in their view as to the authority of the extra-canonical traditions. For the masses of Jewish people, however, since the Pharisees were most influential, the traditions of the Scribes were as binding as the original Law of Moses.

Jesus found in his day not the warm, dyanmic, religious spirit of God, which was characteristic of the prophets, but a cold, ecclesiastical legalism. Pharisaism in an effort to preserve all that was fine and holy in the Jewish culture, too often lost sight of the deeper religious values through the meticulous observance of external rules. Ceremonies too often became mere formality. The system became master of the man rather than his

servant. Negations and complexities of law enslaved the soul and tended to kill the spirit. God was a King of kings and Lord of lords but raised to such an exalted position that individuals seldom found much personal help from Him. He was a righteous Judge who rewarded the obedient and punished the wicked. He was God of the universe, but the Israelites were His chosen people. They could look to Him as a Father over them. The idea of keeping their racial identity and keeping the precepts of Jehovah free from foreign influences dominated their interests to such an extent that the actual mind and character and will of God in hearts of men became secondary. Thus it appeared to Jesus in the light of his own consciousness of God.

## II JESUS' USE OF THE LAW

Jesus made good use of the old Law of Moses. Modern Jewish writers are correct in their contention that Jesus borrowed much of his teaching from the Old Testament. As Dr. Enelow says, "even where Jesus offered something in a new form or in a new way, it accorded with his general aim to disclose the ethical and spiritual content of the old Law."* Jesus was a Jew. "In religious thought and teaching, in feeling and faith, he was a true son of Israel." ** As a loyal Jew he went to the synagogue and the Temple. He respected and appreciated both.(Mk. 1:21,3,1, 4:2)*** He ate at Jewish feasts, attended their wedding ceremonies, and learned their commandments.

### Jesus Knew the Religious Literature of His People

This is one of the clearest impressions which the Gospel writers give us. The Scriptures became as much a part of him as the food which he ate. During great crises of temptation, in moments of sorrow or deep distress, in time of persecution,

* Enelow, Jewish View of Jesus p. 70.
** Bundy, The Religion of Jesus p. 53
***Branscomb, Jesus and the Law of Moses

even at the point of death, he found strength and comfort in the words of the prophets and the Psalmist. The richest elements of Jewish literature flowed from his mind and lips like water from a cool spring which is supplied by an exhaustless vein within. He had lived with them so long and so earnestly that the most familiar commandments burst from his lips with fresh meaning, while the traditional stories of the creation, of Lot's wife and the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the patriachal ancestors, and the kings and prophets took on new colour and vividness. Scribe, Pharisee, layman, and skeptic learned to recognize him as an authority. He had the most appropriate passage in hand either for answer to question, for parabolic illustration, for reenforcement to his own sermons, or for his own personal help.

The Synoptic Gospels contain in all one-hundred and forty-four* references to the canonical old Testament, of which sixty-one** were used by Jesus himself. Horne*** has culled out thirty-three direct quotations of Old Testament passages by Jesus and says that even this list might be enlarged.

* Toy, Quotations in the N. T. Huck, Synopsis of the First Three Gospels, adds three more p. 152

** Booth, The Background of the Bible

*** Horne, Jesus, The Master Teacher 96

The Gospel writers give also twenty-six direct allusions to the Scriptures made by Jesus without quoting directly.* The language which he uses, even its terms and colour, bear a marked resemblance to that of the Old Testament. Of the thirty-three direct quotations fifteen are commandments taken from the Law.

1. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Mt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3)

2. "Thou shalt not make a trial of the Lord thy God." (Mt. 4:7; Deut 6:16)

3. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him alone shalt thou serve." (Mt. 4:10; Deut 6:13)

4. "Thou shalt not kill." (Mt. 5:21; Ex. 20:13 Deut. 5:17)

5. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Mt. 5:27; Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18)

6. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him giver her a writing of divorcement." (Mt. 5:31; Deut 24:1,3).

7. "Thou shalt not forswear thyself." (Mt. 5:33; Lev. 19:12 Num. 30:2, Deut 23:21).

8. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Mt. 5:38; Ex. 21:29, Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21)

*Horne, Jesus the Master Teacher 97-98

9. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor". (Mt. 5:43; Lev. 19:18).

10. "Honour thy father andthy mother". (Mt. 15:4; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16*

11. "He that speaketh evil of father or mother let him die the death." (Mt. 15:4; Ex. 21:17; Lev. 2:9).

12. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." (Mt. 9:15; Gen. 2:24)

13. "Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mt. 19:18,19; Ex. 20:12-16; Deut.5:16-20)

14. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Mt. 33:27; Deut. 6:5).

15. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18). *

It is evident from the context in which these passages are found that Jesus not only knew the fundamental Jewish laws by heart, but that he had

* cf. Ibid, 93-94.

done considerable thinking about them. The first three * he found valuable in facing his own personal temptations, for he told his disciples so, according to the Gospel records. It is possible that he applied all the other commandments to himself in the same severe way before he advocated any of them for others. At least he gave the impression that he knew what it meant to go the full way with God in obeying the commandments.

Jesus knew the Law; yet, his interest in the Scriptures was in no sense legal. He showed every intention of getting at the spirit of the Book and the mind of God. His search for adequate knowledge carried him beyond the Law into the prophetic literature and the Psalms and also into the extra-canonical writings, including the current literature of his day. Although he refers to Deuteronomy and Exodus more often, he shows a preference for Isaiah and the Psalms, for they seem nearer the spirit of the Father. **

* Mt. 4:4b; 4:7b; 4:10b.
** cf. Finney, Huck's Synopsis of the First Three Gospels, 152.

Endorsement But Not Enslavement

Jesus knew the Law. He endorsed it. He conscientiously avoided trouble by explaining that he came "not to destroy but to fulfil" the Law. * Nevertheless he was not a slave to the Law. One of his temptations, second in the Matthew Gospel, was that of using the Scriptures to bolster up a preconceived selfish desire, just as many of the Rabbis were doing with the Law:

"If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and, on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone."**

In answer to it he found another law which was nearer his own conception of the will of God,

"Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God."***

A strict literalist or legalist might have been satisfied with the first.

Commandments four to ten, listed above, Jesus took as illustrations to show how the Old Law was inadequate, in the way it was being interpreted, to meet the needs of the time in which they were living.

* Mt. 5:17
** Mt. 4:6; Ps. 91:11, 12
*** Mt. 4: 7b. Lk. 4: 12b; Deut. 6: 16

The Old Law needed to be brought up to date, expanded, and fulfilled, in order to carry out the principles really involved in it. It was necessary to go beyond the letter of the law in order to be in the kingdom of heaven.

Commandments ten, eleven, and twelve, as listed above, Jesus quoted in refutation of and answer to the Pharisees and Scribes. They criticized his disciples for breaking the tradition of the elders by not going through the cleansing ceremonies before they ate. He asked them why they transgressed the commandment of God because of their tradition. They made "void the word of God" by their tradition.* The commandment bade one honor his father and mother; their tradition made an excuse whereby one did not have to do anything for his father or mother. After all, not the ceremonial cleansing counts for most, not that which enters the body, but the sincerity of heart and the fruits which spring from it. ** Jesus takes this occasion to let them know that some things take

* Mk. 7: 1-23 Mt. 15:1-20
** Mk. 15: 11-15

precedence over their traditions.

### Jesus Recognized A Higher Authority Than Law or Tradition.

Human values are not determined by ceremonies altogether. The heart is the root of all evil or good. God's will is higher in Jesus' estimation than the tradition of the elders. Again the Pharisees questioned Jesus concerning the causes for divorce which are justifiable. He referred them to Moses for authority. Moses allowed them to give a writing of divorce because of the hardness of their hearts. For Jesus anyone who put away his life's partner and married another committed adultery. No cause is justified.* He took the liberty to go beyond the Law of Moses for he felt that the principle underlying it led ultimately to that.

His next use of the commandments, according to the Gospel writers, was in answer to the rich young ruler's inquiry to the way of eternal life. He bade him obey the ten commandments. Then he recognized that in this individual the Law was not suffieient for perfection or satisfaction so he told him specifically the barrier which he would have to remove.** After all, negative Laws cannot work salvation, nor settle all moral, religious, and social

* Matthew makes the single exception of fornication; scholars are pretty well agreed that this exception is Matthew's rather than Jesus'. Mark and Luke make no exception. Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12.

** Matthew 19:16-30.

questions. Each individual must give himself over to the Spirit of God before he can achieve His perfection. With men and laws alone "it is impossible, but not with God. " * So Jesus said, "Follow me" in the Spirit of God.

Finally, he gave two commandments from the Old Law in answer to a question asked him by a lawyer, from among the Pharisees. "Teacher, "he said to Jesus, "which is the greatest commandment in the law?"** It is worth noting that Jesus had already "put the Sadducees to silence"*** Some of the scribes had said, "Thou hast well said."**** Now the lawyers came quizzing him. In other words, Jesus was recognized as an authority in the use of the Law by the best minds of his day. One scribe ventured to say to him, "Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love His neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered directly, he said to him, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God', no man after that did not ask him any question."*****

* Mk. 10*27 Mt. 19;26
** Mt. 19:21; Mk:10:21; Lk. 18:22
*** Mt. 16:36
****Mt. 22:34
***** Mk. 20:39

This brief discourse given by Mark furnishes remarkable insight into Jesus' ability not only to summarize and place the emphasis upon the right point but also to move men to see in the right way.

Jesus differed radically from many scholars of his day and many who followed after him in his use of texts. "There is no elaborate exegesis, no forced interpretations, no wearisome warpings, no painful pressing of passages until they yield the desired meaning, no subtle strainings of the sense of the text."** He selected passages which were rich in religious value and expounded them in a direct and simple fashion. Unlike Matthew, he had no preconceived notions which he read into the Scriptures that he might read them out again. * For him proof of God was not necessary. He assumed God and proceeded to illustrate. "No far-fetched allegories such as we find in I Corinthians 9:9-10, in Galatians 4: 22-31, or in I Cornthians 10:4, such as Paul used, did he find necessary."*** He did not piece-meal the Law in order to prove a point. Neither did he stretch a single word or phrase in order to change the spirit and meaning

** Mt. 1:22, 23; 2: 5-6 2: 18; 3:3.
* Bundy, Religion of Jesus 15.
*** Ibid,15.

of the whole passage. He simply appraised each passage in the light of his own conception of the higher Authority.

In summary then, Jesus made wide and intensive use of the Scriptures. The Law became nerve and fibre of his ethical and religious nature. He knew the Law and became recognized as an authority. It served him in time of temptation, sorrow, and distress. Upon occasion he referred to the Torah as a source of authority. Yet, he did not become a slave to it. Spirit and principle he emphasized rather than letter. Over and above the Law was always a higher authority to whom he felt free to appeal. The Law was valuable not as an end itself but only insofar as it brought individuals into loving fellowship with God and in obedience to the Divine will. To that end all laws must be brought to their finest and fullest fruition. Jesus advocated not less use of the Law but more use and better use of it.

Not Abrogation But Fulfilment

Jesus said, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfil."* It is the purpose of this section to take the specific examples which He gave, in order to see wherein he fulfilled the Law. More exactly, this section will aim at Jesus' real attitude towards the law. For convenience the writer groups the examples under five headings and then ends with a brief discussion of Jesus' conception of God as a loving Father. The five groups of exhibits are: 1. Murder, Anger, and Reconciliation, 2. Divorce and Adultery, 3. Oaths, 4. Love of One's Enemies, 5. Acts of Personal Piety.

Some scholars have doubted the authenticity of Matthew 5:17-19 more especially verses 18 and 19.** Montefiore, for instance, says, "more probably neither 18 nor 19 is authentic. They not only seem inconsistent

* Mt. 5:17
** Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels 2: 46-54

with the attitude of Jesus to the Law taken as a whole, but they reflect later disputes;"* e.g. his statement concerning oaths (Mt.5:23) and the one concerning love for enemies (Mt. 5:39). Allen thinks that verses 18 and 19, while perhaps not the actual words of Jesus spoken at that time, might have had a substantial basis in early traditions. ** Unless one wishes to quibble over mere phraseology there seems to be no difficulty in Jesus' real meaning, as even Mr. Montefiore will admit.*** It is hardly possible that Jesus wished deliberately to discount the Old Law in the eyes of his disciples. In spirit he was not letting "one jot or one tittle ---- pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." **** Every jot and every tittle would be merged into the Law at full growth. In other words, while Jesus recognized the high value which the Law had for them of old, he also saw that in order that the Law might have the same value for those of more

* Ibid 2:51.
** Ibid 2:50.
*** Ibid 2:55.
**** Matthew 5:18.

advanced civilization it must be brought up to date,* i. e. given new meaning. The Law must be a living,growing thing in order to keep up with the development of culture in other ways. Jesus was no man, on the other hand, to keep intact one member of the body if it endangered the life of the whole.** If one jot or one tittle did stand in the way of the progress of the Law as a whole, he would chop it off, yet he would retain the original value of it in the whole. This interpretation seems nearest to the actual spirit of Jesus as revealed in the examples which follow; yet, it avoids the conflicts over which other interpretations stumble.

"By fulfillment he does not mean a mechanical fulfillment"*** in the sense of obedience to the minute letter of the Law. He cared little for the narrowness of the letter. He condemned that "not as wrong, but wholly inadequate." **** "He means a spiritual fulfillment" says Enelow; "He means a grasp of the full content and aim

* Lowstutter, "The Teachings of Jesus"
** Mt. 5: 29, 30
*** Enelow, Jewish View of Jesus 68
**** Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke 76

of the Law, an absorption and application of its spirit, an inward apprehension of its content, and the unfoldment of its purpose in actual life. "* "We shall not understand it, unless we realize that it was just the whole of the Old Testament that he claimed to fulfil . . . . There was a permanent and a spiritual element in the Law, and that he preserved, but it might mean the passing away of much that was temporary."**

Jesus stood for a righteousness which would "exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees".*** Perhaps he wondered how they could deal in such piffling business as they did; technical, mechanical, cold detail, while they missed the real thing itself. For him all these things were valuable only in so far as they helped him get at the real thing.**** Not less righteousness, but more righteousness Jesus demanded. The best way to see that is to study the rest of the Sermon on the Mount.

* Enelow, Jewish View of Jesus 68
** Headlam, Life and Teachings of Jesus
*** Mt. 5:20
**** Lowstutter, Teachings of Jesus

Murder, Anger, and Reconciliation

In Matthew 5:21-48 Jesus takes six examples to show the way in which he is fulfilling the Old Law. Each he begins with the declaration, "Ye, have heard that it was said to them of old time" * and then gives the Old Law in the way in which they are probably used to hearing it read. He does not say, Ye have heard that it was said to Moses or by Moses, perhaps implying thereby, that it was the traditional reading or the oral Law, or he might mean that what they have is not fixed forever so that it cannot be changed; i. e. that it is not the everlasting word of God, as some of the Rabbis were preaching. It was the Law of old time which they were used to hearing that he was going to fulfill. ** The first law of old time which Jesus quotes, for example is, in the Old Testament only in part. "The words, 'whoever shall murder shall be liable to the tribunal' are not in the Old Testament."***

* Mt. 5: 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43
** See Montefiore, Synoptic Gospels 2:5 8-60
*** Ibid 2:58

They probably were annexed to the original commandment, in Deut. 16:18 by the Rabbis in order to give the Sanhedrin the right to enforce the Law.

But the text of the commandment is clear: "Thou shalt not kill"* Jesus applies that to incorporate a fuller meaning than the Rabbis were using. Murder did not mean, necessarily, the case where a person was made to stop breathing. There were other ways of killing besides the inhibition of the physical organism. To become angry with a brother might conceivably do him as much injury as death itself. To call him a shameful name such as "Raca" (empty headed)** or "fool" might be worse than taking his physical life.*** To kill a man socially, to enslave him economically, to make him suffer through corrupt political graft, or to maim his character through ill spoken language might be fully as dangerous as to give him liquid poison. As to the specific danger impending these various types of murder, which Jesus assigns, there is some question. He that kills or is angry with

* Mt. 5: 21; Deut. 16:18
** Montefiore, Synoptic Gospels 58
*** Mt. 5: 21, 22

his brother" shall be in danger of the council; he that cries unto his brother "Raca" shall be in danger of the council; and whoever shall say, 'Thou fool' shall be in danger of the hell of fire"* Why the difference? Possibly, as Plummer suggests, it is ironic play upon the piffling distinctions which certain of the scribes made. ** The important consideration is that the same principle which in old times prohibited a man from murder should now help him to control his temper and have due consideration for the other man's welfare.

Jesus did not stop with negations. He gave the positive step to take in order to ammend the wrong which the brother had suffered.: "First be reconciled with thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift . . . . Agree with thine adversary quickly"*** lest he cause you more trouble. This is a step further than the last. Perfection in the kingdom of God demands that you go beyond the conventional half-way line in order to

* Ibid
** Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke 79
*** Mt. 5: 24-25

remain on amicable terms. You are to go to thy brother, "if he have ought against thee" * and make things satisfactory with him first; then you can offer your gift at the altar and be reconciled to God.** So a great deal of suffering can be avoided on both sides if you will make the necessary step towards reconciliation. In the time of Moses, while the children of Israel were in a half-civilized nomadic stage of development to refrain from killing one's adversary was a wholesome law. Now, the law in its fruition, applied the same restrictions upon other kinds of killing. To have murder in the heart had its killing effect just the same as murder by the hand. The Old Law in reality aimed at better relationship between man and man and consequently between man and God. Jesus simply gave the old Law a deeper, richer, fuller meaning. Man must not only refrain from killing, he must love.

Divorce and Adultery

"It was an accusation against Jesus in his lifetime that he was not ascetic. His

* Mt. 5: 23
** Mt. 6: 12 "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

disciples had had no rules of fasting given them. He himself (unlike the ordinary professed religious teacher) was ready to accept hospitality of a very mixed character; he took part in the marriage feast; he did not shrink with horror from the professedly immoral, but recognized even there the elements of piety and devotion." * He did not give up as hopeless a woman who had "five husbands", and of whom it could then be said that he whom she had was "not""her husband".** When others would stone the woman taken in adultery, he had compassion upon her and did not condemn her. *** Yet Jesus stood firmly against both adultery and divorce.

He looked upon the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery", in the same manner as the one against murder. The seat of the evil was in an evil mind and heart rather than in the act itself. "Every one that looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart",

* Headlam, Life and Teachings of Jesus 221. Mt. 11:16-19.

** Walker, T., The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Age, 275. Jno 14:18.

*** Jno. 7:53-8:11.

was the Old Law in its mature form. True, other Rabbis had reached that conception, or a similiar one, before Jesus. '"Hide your eye from a lovely woman"', says one writer, "and don't gaze upon beauty which is not yours, by the comliness of a woman many have been ruined and this way flames like fire. With a married woman don't sit at table, and (don't mingle) wine in her company; lest you incline your heart towards her, and your blood (descend) to the pit'"* Another Rabbi writes, "He that has a pure mind in love, does not look after a woman with a view to fornication, for he has no defilement in his heart, because the spirit of God rests upon him."'** In the Book of Wisdom is the statement, "'And happy is the one who had wrought no lawless deed with his hands.'"*** Other writers made similar statements. Consequently, there is nothing original about our Master's view of adultery. This, however, does not diminish

* Sirach 9:9 Walker, T. The Teachings of ~~Jesus and the Jewish~~ Teachings of His Age 233

** Ibid 234

*** Wisdom 3:14 Ibid 273

its value as an illustration of the way in which the Law was being fulfilled. It simply shows that his thoughts upon the subject had reached the mountain peaks along with a few others. The purity of the whole character was worth any sacrifice, whether it be a "right eye" or even the "right hand". It is better to sever even that which one likes best than to let it cause the whole man to go the way of hell.

Likewise in the matter of divorce Jesus did not contribute so much which was new; but he directed the attention of the masses to the highest conception yet attained. And evidently this interpretation of the Law concerning divorce was not the one which was most popular in dis day. It was "a time when in Judea the teaching of the Scripture was being learnedly interpreted so as to permit the very license which they were written to forbid." * In Jesus' view the proper consideration for one's wife would not permit divorce, for to divorce her would be to turn her into the streets unprotected. She would become an adulteress for protection and provision. Most

* F.G. Peabody, Jesus Christ and the Social Question, 158.
cf. I. Abrahams Studies in Phariseeian and the Gospels.

scholars agree that Matthew, who makes one exception, that of the wife having committed fornication, is less authentic in his report at this point than the other two.* Of course it would be true that if a woman made herself an adulteress, one could not say her husband would make her an adulteress by thereupon divorcing her. But "the person offended against must remain single in order to be able to receive back the guilty party in case of repentence"** to carry out the full significance of the Law. In Matthew's record Jesus would allow divorce for the one cause, but under no consideration does he justify a second wife or husband after divorce. That would be adultery. In Mark and Luke "prohibition of divorce is made absolute" *** In this regard Jesus was in perfect agreement with the sect of Zadokites, "' which forbade divorce, or at all events remarriage'" as against both the school of Hillel which 'gave the husband the legal right to divorce his wife for any cause' and the rival school of Shammai, 'which limited the

* Cf. Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary ~~on the Gospel According~~ to St. Matthew 81

** Lake, K. The Expositor 425f

*** Walker, T. The Teachings of Jesus and The Jewish Teachings of His Age. 273

right to the case in which the wife was unchaste'"* Under the Roman custom a woman could put away her husband for another. Jesus forbade that also as falling under the sin of adultery.**

As in the examples above, Jesus' main emphasis is due consideration for the feelings, rights and welfare of the other party. One had better lose his right hand than to cause another to lose his chastity. One cannot put away his chosen companion without having her thrust upon the world with a broken spirit and probably unprotected, where literally she will have to sell her body to live. A man with the right kind of a heart will not do it. "Jesus is dealing with human values. He is seeing the best way in which he can bring His kind of men and women into the world."*** Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife out of the hardness of the people's hearts, not because it was sanctioned by God.**** There is a clear distinction between the Law of Moses and the will of God. The latter takes precedence over the former. It is the ultimate fulfillment of the Law of Moses.

* Abrahams, I. Studies in Phariseeism and the Gospels
** Mk. 10:12
*** Lowstutter: "The Teachings of Jesus"
**** Mk. 10:4-12; Lk. 19-7-9

Oaths.

"Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God, nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king ..... But let your speech be yea, yea, Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.'"*

Herein Montefiore thinks that it is difficult to say that "the new teaching does not . . . 'annul', or disavow, or transverse the old"** For if Jesus prohibits all oaths he is adding a distinctly new element. It is dubious, however, whether or not Jesus meant that. He himself used the emphatic phrase: "verily I say unto you" *** upon a number of occasions. Modern Jewish writers imagine that Jesus coined the phrase in order to avoid swearing. **** But again they trifle with words rather than see the spirit which Jesus

* Mt. 5: 33-35
** Montefiore: The Synoptic Gospels II:51
*** Mt. 5: 18 and others
**** Montefiore: The Synoptic Gospels II:51f.

is trying to convey. "Others suppose that Jesus' words have nothing to do with oaths in conversation and ordinary social intercourse. "*
That too is setting limitations upon a Law which has come to its fullness. A better interpretation is that held by Box and McNeile** They claim that "Jesus does not abrogate or modify the Law: he simply goes behind it pointing to the better way, and laying down a general principle."***
What Christ demands is"'An absolute fidelity to promise'"**** When a man means yes, he should say "Yes". When he means no, he should say, "No."
This is the explanation which James5: 12 makes, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay".*****
What does it add to the veracity of a statement to swear by it any number of times? On the other hand, why should a court imply doubt in a man's word by making him swear upon oath to tell the truth? ****** "The Jewish law against perjury had regard to the duty of veracity and fidelity to promises. It did not, however, lay this duty down absolutely, but confined itself to the requirement that words attested

* Ibid 68
** McNeille, The Gospel According to St. Mt.
*** Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels 68 Quoting Box 119
**** Ibid 49 quoting Mr. Marriott
***** Ibid 69
****** Lowstutter The Teachings of Jesus

on oath should correspond with truth or performance".* The Jews for the most part, held that a lie was not sinful unless sworn to, and perjury was all right except when they were sworn into court in a specific manner.** For example, like many Christians today, if they held up only two fingers when the law required three, while they were taking their oath, they considered themselves justified in bearing false witness.*** "False swearing was especially common among the Jews of the Dispersion, engaged in trade." **** They used a long string of oaths to prove that they were telling the truth concerning their goods, about which they were lying. They were far from the original commandment, even. Jesus would expand the old Law which said "perform unto the Lord thine oaths, ***** to read "Do not swear at all" ***** simply tell the truth. The truth is the truth with or without an oath. Why profane the name of God, heaven, or the Holy City, or why be foolish by swearing upon the body? Not the oath nor the jesture verifies the statement.

* Montefiore: The Synoptic Gospels.
** Plummer : An Exegetical Commentary Upon the Gospel According to Matthew.
*** Lowstutter: "The Teachings of Jesus"
**** Plummer : An Exegetical Com. on Matthew 83.
***** Mt. 5:33-35

The truth depends upon the speaker himself. What Jesus is asking for is not simply a better use of the language but a man whom he could believe when he said "yes" or when he said "no". If a man has the proper regard for his brother he will speak the truth. Oath's do not add anything to the truth or to human value. To require an oath of a brother is to lack confidence in his word. Therefore the simple "yea" and "nay" are best for all practical purposes.

Love for One's Enemy

The Lex Talionis restricted a man's retaliation upon his enemy to "an eye for an eye" and"a tooth for a tooth"*. Jesus saw that this law carried out to its proper goal meant that one should have due consideration for the other fellow. It was said one time, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy"** But Jesus would have it, "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." ***

The old law allowed for revenge and restitution. "They shall destroy those who have destroyed them, and shall insult those who defamed them. They shall spit in the face scorned by me."****

* Mt. 5:38
** Mt. 5: 43
*** Mt. 5:44
**** Walker, T. The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Age 237 quoting (The Apoc. Abr. 29)

"There is no love for the enemy, but only an enthusiasm to make him pay"* "Your enemy has persecuted you, says an early writer, "But shortly you will see his destruction, and will tread upon their necks". "Inability to make restitution or reparation would be allowed to bar the way to reconciliation. ..... Where there is no restitution or reparation, there is no forgiveness --- such is the Law. To have vengence on the enemy, and to exact compensation as a condition of reconciliation is the orthodoxy of the Torah."**

True "the Jews regarded the obligation to love one's neighbor(Lev. 19:18) as binding, but they asked, who is my neighbour?" For them it became more or less of a question of whom they were free to hate.*** Sira, for example, wrote "Forgive your neighbor the injury, and then, when you pray, your sins will be forgiven." (28:2)****

Yet he approves of a man avenging his enemies for wrong done.(25:7) ***** Walker gives a long list of references exhorting the Jews to love their

* Ibid 237
** Ibid 238, quoting 1Bar 4:25
*** Ibid 238
**** Plummer: Exegetical Commentary on Matthew 87
***** Ibid 231

"neighbour or to love their brother. Some few writers go beyond this. One places an enemy alongside a neighbour (2En.1:3)*. Exodus 18:4 commands one to return to an enemy an animal which he has lost, if found. As Montefiore contends, the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus probably did not practice "tit for tat" in the literal sense. They demanded justice and restitution through ordinary court procedure.** Under them the law was already progressing*** even though other Rabbis did not state a law of love in so striking a manner and illustrate it so vividly as did Jesus.

The full swing of Jesus' attitude towards his fellowmen is not clear until one places "Resist not him that is evil ....." together with "love your enemies" ****. Without the latter, the former would become folly. By loving your enemies Jesus meant to "desire their well being, do good to them, pray for their salvation"***** It is for this reason, as well as for the self discipline which it offers, that you are to "resist not him that is evil"******

* Ibid 231
** Montefiore: The Synoptic Gospels 276-79
*** cf. Job 3:29, Prov. 17:15; 24:29, Ps. 7:4,5:35 Book of Secrets of Enoch 50:4. 12-12
**** Mt. 5: 39, 43
***** Montefiore: The Synoptic Gospels 2:80
****** Mt. 5:39

The emphasis is upon love. You are to do that which will help the offender most. The old law placed restrictions upon the one offended. The law of love has no limit. It allows you to do all you can to help the offender. Forgive him the offense "seventy times seven", * if it will help him any. If he unjustly usurps your coat, give him your cloak also; if he smites you on the right cheek, turn to him the left -- if that is the best thing you can do for his well being. Think first of the offender. Dismiss "the desire for retaliation and for revenge".** Go with your enemy twice as far as he makes you. Give to him, lend to him, if it will make a cleaner better man of him.

To say that Jesus would not resist any evil is to beg the question. He did not hesitate to drive the money changers out of the temple *** nor to defend the adulteress against those who would have stoned her, nor to tell the Pharisees

* Matthew 18:21.

** Montefiore: The Synoptic Gospels, p 273.

*** Mark 11:15-17, Matthew 21:12,13, Luke 19:45,46.

and scribes straight to their faces that they were hypocrites and like whited sepulchres.* Each time he did it for the good of the offender not for any idea of retaliation or revenge. If punishment becomes necessary, Jesus would allow punishment, so long as it is for reformation and correction and not retaliation. Jesus makes himself clear at this point in Mt. 18:15-20: "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his falut between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." And from Jesus' common sense view of the whole as related to its parts, as he reveals in Mt. 5: 29, 30, it would follow that in the case of a menace to society, the best thing you could do with him would be to sever him from social relationship. After trying every means possible to adjust him to society, if he still persists in doing evil, place him behind bars and there treat him as best you can.**

* Mt. 23:27
** Lowstutter: "The Teachings of Jesus"

The most important reward which a man can attain, in the opinion of Jesus is to become a son of the Father who is in heaven. That comes as a result of loving his enemies. To be a son of the heavenly Father is to love one's enemies just as He does: "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same"?* Jesus wants one to go beyond the standards of the old, ordinary rules. The old Law restricted one's good will; the law of God has no limit to charity.

In the commandment to love one's enemies Jesus reached the climax of his teaching and went beyond the best of Jewish teachers. Israel Abrahams in his Studies in Phariseeism and the Gospels says, "We do not find in the Rabbinic literature a parallel to the striking paradox 'Love your enemies'".** Others had suggested it indirectly. "In its negative form it had been already announced both among the Jews and among the Greeks." *** What is hateful to thyself

* Mt. 5:45-48; Lk. 32-33

** Abrahams: cf. also Montefiore: Some Elements of the Religious Teachings of Jesus According to the Synoptic Gospels 112

*** Gore: The Sermon on the Mount 181

do not to thy neighbour; this is the whole law, the rest is commentary'", said Hillel in summary. But "our Lord enlarged the meaning of 'neighbour' and narrowed that of 'enemy' by abolishing the element of race distinction from both."* In other words, as Gore would say: "We are to remember that every one in God's sight counts for one; and that nobody counts for more than one."**

In his one commandment of "love" we have "the essence of our Lord's teaching"*** It is the full blossom and the finest fruit of all the Law. Negations lose themselves in a loving spirit. If one becomes moved by the love of God and his fellowman negations do not bother him, for he does not need them. If a man has the proper regard for others he need have no fear of laws. One really does not catch the full force of the commandment until he reads in John 13:34, "as I have loved you." Jesus' own life reflecting the love of God, gave dynamic to the law. "Love one another was old, but'as I have loved you' (Jno. 13:34) gave it new significance"****

** Gore, Sermon on the Mount 182
*** Headlam, Life and Teaching of Jesus 218-19
**** Walker T. Teachings of Jesus and Jewish Teachings of his Age. 270
***** Jno. 4:24
* Plummer: An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 87

Acts of Personal Piety

Jesus next takes each of the three habitual acts of piety in turn and shows how it might be enriched and made more meaningful. His conception of righteousness is closely allied with his conception of the heavenly Father. "God is Spirit, and he that worships him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."* Prophets before Jesus called attention to the heart as being the seat of righteousness rather than outward form. But Jesus put this on a practical plane as being the only authoritative and worthwhile seat of righteousness. "All merely external deportment is worthless before God."** He does not condemn alms-giving, public prayer, or fasting. But he who delivers these before men simply to be seen of them, receives nothing more than the reward of man. Only he who centers his attention upon God, whether in giving alms, in praying, or fasting can hope for the reward from the Father in heaven, Keep sacred to thyself thy dealings with God "and thy Father who seeth in

* Jno. 4:24
** Wendt, The Teachings of Jesus ; 1:266

secret shall recompense thee."*

Moral and spiritual duties should come first in order to receive the reward of the Father in heaven. Seek first the kingdom of God and the other worthwhile things will be added.** When offering a gift before the altar, be reconciled first with the offended brother and then to God. "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what the right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret."*** "When thou prayest enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret." you cannot have the proper kind of fellowship with God when your attention is upon other men. "Thou, when thou fasteth, annoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in secret."**** In order to have the peace and joy and happiness of the fellowship with God you must love, obey, and trust him.

God does not receive one who camouflages. He accepts only the real giver, the real prayerer, or the real faster. The hypocrites, who are out for public show, may receive the public recognition which they desire. But they fool themselves if they think God will

* Mt. 6:4; 6:18 (see: Headlam Life and Teachings of Jesus
** Mt. 6:33 Lk. 12:31
*** Mt. 6:3, 4,

reward them at the same time. One cannot be a player who is conscious of an audience and at the same time lose himself in his devotions to God. Certain of the Pharisees Jesus thus classed as hypocrites, for they worried too much about whether or not people were seeing their example of righteousness; too much about the sound of their voices, the way they stood, the gesture which they made, the costume which they wore, and the food which they ate. They went about with a "sad countenance, for they difigured their faces, that they might be seen of men to fast"* They had too much selfish pride and were too conscious of outward form ever to become sons of the Father who is in heaven. Jesus does not object to men being seen in prayer, or fasting, or giving alms. It is the desire to be seen which hurts the man. He must leave that outside if he hopes to receive the reward of the Father.

"Our Lord leaves unnoticed the doctrine that alms can remove the consequences of sin, and even purge men from the stain of sin" which was referred to in the first section of this paper. "He is content to insist that alms-giving (praying and

* Mt. 6:16

and fasting) must be done in God's sight, without thought of man's praise. Purity of motive was the essential thing, and, if that was secured, the idea of buying pardon for sin would lose its hold. Christ had other ways of teaching how sin and its effects could be removed."* His way was the divine way. In place of all the cold formalisms, in place of all mechanical ceremonies,"in place of the great external system of worship which had been built up at Jerusalem" ** he preached an inward religion which had dynamic in a loving Father God. Sincerity of heart, took the place of tribal selfish interests. Love burst bonds, which set the spirit free.

"Jesus differed, "therefore,"from the Pharisees' movement in the importance which he attached to the traditional ritual and ceremonial practices. He transformed the ethical ideal into an ethical imperative and in comparison with it, relegated the ritual duties, even though commanded in the Torah, to a distinctly secondary and practically unessential position.*** The old Law was a system of rule, admirable in character as rules go,

* Plummer: An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew 92
** Headlam: The Life and Teachingsof Jesus 228
*** Brandscomb: Jesus and the Law of Moses 262

"comments Headlam, "but with all the limitations of such a system. The new law was one of principle ;------- If we banish all our evil and impure thoughts, the evil actions which arise from them will be impossible." * External superfluities are not necessary to reach a Father-God. He is no longer a transcendent being so Holy and so far away that he cannot be reached ; but as a Father he is near enough to take an interest in our individual needs.** We can talk with Him, love Him, and feel His presence. He is good; we can trust Him; He loves us in the same way in which we ought to love our fellowmen. Jesus died to show the world how much God does care for us.

The fulfillment which Jesus gave the Old Law was, then, an inward religion of the heart rather than an outward formalism, a kind consideration for everyone, including one's enemies; a veracity of work and a purity of heart and motive, in place of false oaths and ostentations; a good God with whom we are to have a filial relationship; and a spirit

* Headlam: The Life and Teachings of Jesus 217.
** cf. Walker,T. The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Day. 62.

of emancipation which broke the chains of the Law and gave man a dynamic with which to live and grow in the strength and knowledge of the Lord. Much like a beautiful moth, when it bursts out of its shell into the light, the Law which Jesus gave was essentially the same organism as that bound up in the old Law of Moses. But the transition from the pupal to the adult stage of development was so great that the two could hardly be recognized as the same. In a very real sense Jesus did not destroy the Law, for while he brought the Law into its finest fruition, he broke away only the silky, external covering which incased the Law and protected it during its tender stage of development. By the touch of his own personality he expanded the old into something more living, active, and beautiful. Some parts apparently remained behind with the old cocoon. New formations came to replace them. Whenever Jesus destroyed the old, he did so that he might create something greater in its place.

## JESUS' CONFLICT WITH THE PHARISEES.

### Nature of the Conflict

Any discussion of Jesus' attitude towards the old Law would not be complete without a word concerning his attitude towards the Pharisees and their reaction against him, for Jesus himself was interested not primarily in the Law but in those who used the Law. The mechanics of religion never seemed to affect Jesus very gravely. Only as it produced a better partnership between man and God was he interested in it. For Jesus religion was always a deeply personal matter between man and his Creator.* In order to see the real attitude of Jesus toward the Old Law, therefore, it is necessary to see his application of the Law to life; and more especially to see how his teaching affected the Pharisees, whose arduous task it was to keep the old Law in tact against infiltrations from foreign cults.

### The Pharisees' Charge Against Jesus

In spite of the fact that, as our Jewish scholars have so thoroughly proven, there was

* cf. Bundy, The Religion of Jesus 277-278

little in the actual teachings of Jesus for which there was not a parallel somewhere in the documents and traditions of Judaism, he fell into terrible disrepute among the Pharisees as a dangerous heretic. In the first place they disliked his attitude toward the Law. Although he took the precaution of Matthew 5:17-20 to explain to them his intention to fulfil the Law, not to destroy it, there were some who, perhaps rightly, felt that he was depreciating some of their sacred laws and traditions. They felt that he was taking too much liberty to change the old. Any young reformer meets the same resentment from the older group, no matter what he undertakes in the way of changing the status quo. And it was a tremendous step to take, from the Old Law to the one which Jesus advocated. No one denies it. Anyone of the commandments revised to meet the current needs would probably have caused little stir, for the Rabbis introduced a new idea once in a while themselves. But "the net result is not only new but revoluntionary; so was it understood by the Pharisees. They and Jesus indeed spoke the same words and appealed to

same authorities, but they rightly saw in him a revolutionist who threatened the existence of their most cherished hopes. The Messianic kingdom which they sought was opposed point by point to the kingdom of which he spoke, and their God and his Father -- though called by the same sacred name -- were different."*1.

In the second place, they found fault with Jesus because he taught "as one having authority" and not as the scribes"* In the first place since he did not belong to the Phariseeical group nor to the priestly group, they probably chaffed a bit at his assuming the right to teach the Law at all. Furthermore it was a rule pretty definitely understood among Rabbinical circles that no teacher should teach without some authority other than himself, either the Torah or some recognized teacher before him. Jesus spoke with an authority which no one could miss.**

He assumed authority not only to teach but also to forgive sins.*** The Jews considered this blasphemy, for they said only God has that right."*** His power to heal their bodies as well

* Mt. 7: 29 Mk. 1:22
** Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash 9, 151
*** Matt. 9:2; Mk. 2:10; Lk. 5:20 260

1. The Encyclopedia Britannica, 280

as their souls were probably all the more distasteful. His independence, thoroughness, a and directness, and his consequent popularity must have brought jealously and hate upon his head from his rivals among the Rabbis. Then to see him mix freely with publicans and sinners, added scandal to hate and contempt upon irritation.* He nor his disciples were as scrupulous in obeying the rules regarding the Sabbath and performing all the customary ceremonies of cleansing before eating as they might have been. Some of the more cautious fathers perhaps saw the ruination of the younger generation through this young teacher's careless attitude toward their ascetic practices. Nor did they gain much satisfaction when they took it upon themselves to go directly to the young fellow and give him a good measure of sound advice, in a nice paternal spirit, for he always had a bright answer for them.** There was not

* Matthew 12:1-8, 9-14. Mark 2:23ff, 2:1ff, Luke 6:1ff, 13:4. John 5:10ff, 9:13ff.

much left which they could do to help him. He spurned every suggestion for the proper conduct of his society, which they had to offer. What hurt them still worse, he did not stop with refusing to listen to them. He insulted them, if the Gospel accounts are correct, by implying that they did not show their aged parents the proper respect. According to the Law they were supposed to honor their parents. But, according to Jesus, they had in their traditions a trick word, "Corban", which they used to avoid the Law. "If a man shall say to his father or his mother, 'That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban,' that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do." * This seems rather unfair to the Pharisee, for the historical Jew is known for his respect and

* Mark 7:11-13; Matthew 15:5-6.

loyalty to his parents. Certainly a self-respecting Pharisee would not trick his parents nor accept his duty toward them so lightly as this passage suggests. The catch is in the word "Corban", which is an oath or a promise to God. They felt that loyalty to God came before loyalty to parents even. To accuse them of promising all their possessions to God in order to escape giving any to their parents seems a bit unfair to them. * Such personal affronts as this could do little other than arouse their wrath against him. "They accused him of being in league with Beelzebub." ** "They felt instinctively that the whole spirit of his life was in flat contradiction with their most cherished convictions." *** They felt that he was blaspheming God in assuming so much authority; that he was the wrong kind of an example for people to be following in practices of piety; that he was entirely too familiar with

* Cf. Herford, Judaism in the New Testament, Ch. upon "The Pharisee."

** Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15.

*** Eaton, D., Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, p 828.

publicans, sinners, and even the Devil himself; that he was disrespectful toward his elders to the point of insult and slander; and that he was encroaching upon their territory. The young upstart had to be made way with, they thought, in order to safeguard the Law and traditions of Israel and to keep their own integrity.

But if the Pharisees were certain of the ground upon which they stood, Jesus was more certain. He was ready to die before he would permit a few "hypocrites" to kill the best that he had in him. He wanted men and women to know that there was more in religion than those "blind guides, who strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel" * put into it. He wanted them to know a living, personal, dynamic, helpful God, a good God who knows how to love each and every child which He

* Matthew 23:24.

creates. He wanted men to see beyond the Law, a kingdom of God in which all human kind are brothers, one to another, and children of God. He would not be defeated.

Jesus' Attacks Upon Certain Pharisees

"Jesus held the Pharisees in honor in so far as they rightly interpreted the spirit of the Mosaic legislation, but when he found them contradicting the spirit by their traditions, he was against them. It was no set part of his programme deliberately to upset prevailing relationships with the priests of the Temple."* That was contrary to his policy of love. His attacks were directed for their best welfare.

The Pharisee whom Jesus attacked "was both critical and hypocritical, critical with regard to others, with regard to himself hypocritical."** Jesus charged them with being ostentatious in prayer, fasting, and giving alms. They were pious that they might be seen of men instead of being righteous before God.*** THey were two faced, "Well did Isaish prophesy of you, saying.

> This people honoreth me with their lips
> But their heart is far from me
> But in vain do they worship me,
> Teaching as their doctrines the
> precepts of men" ****

* Walker: The Teachings of Jesus and the Jewish Teachings of His Age 284

** Gore, The Sermon on the Mount 165

*** Mt. 6:2, 5, 16

**** Mt. 15:7-8

He accused them of shuting the kingdom of heaven from men by not entering themselves.*And when they did succeed in getting a proselyte, they made him more of a son of hell than themselves.** They piffle over little matters while they leave the more important matters go undone.*** They are like unto "whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are of dead man's bones and of all uncleanness."**** And while they honor the prophets which their ancestors slew and say they would not kill the prophets if they had lived at that time, they are "partakers with them in the blood of the prophets" ***** for they are sons and daughters of their iniquitous ancestors, in every respect. They have not changed their way of living one iota because of the prophets whose tombs they garnish. They are hypocrites. They have their mind on ulterior motives. They make pretence instead of being real actors in the spirit of God. They "were the offspring of the vipers and serpents"******, an evil and adulterous

* Mt. 28:13
** Mt. 28:15
*** Mt. 28:16, 2,3,
***** Mt. 28:29-31
**** Mt. 28:27
****** Mt. 12*34, 23:33

generation."* He warned his disciples against the "leaven of the Pharisee"** for they were "blind guides" *** and "would not qualify for admission into the kingdom of heaven"**** "He declared that while the publicans and harlots were entering the kingdom, they were remaining outside.*****

Upon one occasion Jesus attempted to put them in their proper place by saying, "Be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren, and call no man your Father on the earth: one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant, and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted."****** With this mass of striking evidence it is not difficult to see that fundamentally there was a very real conflict between the Law which the Pharisees accepted and the Law which Jesus taught.

* Mt. 12:39, 16:4
** Mt. 16:6 ff Mk. 8:15, Lk 12:1
*** Mt. 15:14, 23:16, 19, 24,26
**** Mt. 5:20
***** Mt. 21:31f (cf. Eaton, Dictionary of the Bible Hastings 3:828-829
****** Mt. 23:8-12

Dr. Marlatt in his course, Spiritual Values in the World Literature, has pictured graphically the saliant points of conflict between the Pharisaic spirit and the Christian spirit, as revealed in Christ's teachings, in the following chart. The Pharisaism here represented is the degenerate type to which Christ objected. It does not represent Phariseeism at its highest.

| Phariseeism | Christianity * |
|---|---|
| 1. causalistic and ritualistic | moral and spiritualistic |
| 2. self regulation | self realization |
| 3. God, a transcendent Lord, the ineffable law | God, an immanent, Spirit Our Father, love |
| 4. particularism | universalism |
| 5. circumcision an outward symbol | conversion, and inward experience |
| 6. ceremonial purity piety | essential goodness, personality |
| 7. "Dead man's bones" | "Water of life" |

*Marlatt: "Spiritual Values in World Literature"
B. U. S. T. 1932

## Final Summary.

In the time of Jesus there were four sects of the Jews. The Zealots, on the radical flank, looked with disdain upon Roman domination and were ready to take up the sword in revolt. On the opposite extreme were the peace-loving Essenes who won the respect of the worst Roman tyrant by their freedom from anxiety, their common meals and their fraternal spirit. The Sadducees who were priests by birth-right aligned themselves with the royal party in power and sought to inculcate elements of Hellenism into Judaism. Opposed to them and most influential over the people were the Pharisees who took it upon themselves the task of preserving all that was sacred in their culture. They saw in the infiltrations of other cults an end of their faith. To keep their conception of Jehovah high and secure above the gods of foreign cults, which were being introduced to their people, they set forth innumerable rules of discipline to be used daily. Numerous prayers, fasts, and ceremonies of cleansing they practiced in minute detail and at regular intervals, so that they would not forget the Almighty.

They impressed upon the minds of the Jewish people the idea that they were a distinct people, the chosen of God, and for that reason must maintain a separateness from others.

The God of Pharisaic Judaism was a supermundane Judge over the whole universe, who rewarded the obedient and punished the wicked. His word was Law, and in His Law they placed their trust. He was the God of Israel, who protected His chosen ones. He was exalted above the earth, a transcendent Lord.

The Pharisees had a distinct purpose in mind. They accomplished it. Except for their earnest zeal much of the rich Jewish culture, perhaps the Torah itself, might have filtered away and become lost among the many lower cults of the time.

Nevertheless the very system which they used so aptly to preserve their religion became a barrier to religious progress. Ceremonies and rituals grew cold and mechanical. Formalities failed too often to inspire inward righteousness. Particularism tended to kill the spirit. Too many negative laws shackled the soul instead of allowing freedom of expression. Obedience to the letter of the law

rather than the principle was the result. Ceremonial purity and external piety took theplace of essential goodness and God-like character. God was exalted too far above the earth to be of much help or comfort. His name was to be kept holy, His laws obeyed, and his majesties performed that the Heathen world might know that He was the Lord God of Israel. Such a conception of God tended towards nationalism rather than universalism.

Jesus was an authority of the Law; He made good practical use of it both for his own personal piety and for his teaching. The records which we have of his teaching are full of direct quotations, allusions, words, and phrases, from both the Torah and the current literature of his day, yet, his extensive use of the old Law is paralleled by his freedom in the use of it. He quotes it as authority upon occasion. But always there is a higher authority which he recognizes, his own conception of the mind, will, and spirit of God. He is,therefore, not dependent upon the Scriptures for an authority. He is no slave to them. And his use of the text is simple and direct, never warped, stretched, or chopped up in order to make a point which he had

conceived beforehand. When he quotes a commandment or expounds one from the old Law, the touch of his own personality fires it with new meaning and power.

Not destruction but fulfillment was Jesus' policy with regard to the old Law. He wanted to give it life and meaning. He wanted it brought to its finest fruition. If necessary to sever a-part in order to have the whole organism of a finer, healthier type, he was willing to see the part go. The mold or pattern which covers and protects it in the pupa stage must be discarded as soon as it cramps and hinders further development. Self regulation must give way to self realization.

The fulfillment which Jesus gave the Law was an inward religion of the heart rather than an outward formalism; a kind consideration for everyone, including one's enemies; a veracity of word and a purity of heart and motive, in place of false oaths and ostentations; a good God with whom all are to have filial relationship; and a spirit of emancipation which broke the chains of the Law and gave man dynamic with which to live and grow

in the strength and knowledge of the Lord. He replaced legalism with love. He set personality above the Law.

"The conflict was one between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion, viz. that in which the supreme authority was Torah, and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience." * The Pharisees saw Jesus undermining their whole religion when he removed the absolute authority of the Scriptures. That was the central pillar of their whole structure. His principles carried to their ultimate end would mean something entirely different from faith in Jehovah as they conceived it. Jesus in their eyes was a very dangerous heretic. Numerous personal criticisms developed upon both sides out of these two fundamentally different conceptions of religion. The Pharisees thought Jesus was a bad example to his followers because he did not see fit to fast and perform the acts of cleansing in the same way in which they did. He broke the Sabbath by letting his disciples pluck grain and eat it, and also by

* Herford, R.T., Pharisaism Its Aim and Method, p 167

healing the lame upon that day. Jesus, upon the other hand, thought they might well be ministering unto their inner character instead of worrying about external formalities. They criticized him for associating with sinners. He criticized them for being too proud, ostentatious, and hypocritical. They thought he received his power from Beelzebub. He called them blind guides who made their proselyte more a son of hell than themselves. The difference lay in the two conceptions of religion. For Jesus "religion consisted not so much in a prescribed round of duty, as in a certain disposition, certain way of feeling, thinking, and choosing.------ His service consists not no much in the outer forms of action as in the inward temper and character, in love to God and to men." * He was interested primarily not in Law but in men. Laws were good in so far as they helped men to come into the proper relationship with God. They were of no value as ends in themselves. They were priceless tools in the hearts of men when used properly; when misused or

* Stevens, G.B., The Teachings of Jesus, p 5.

abused they were worthless. Jesus advocated inward obedience to spirit and principle as over against external obedience to letter. He set the authority of God above that of the old Law, man before institution, love in the place of legalism.

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Note ----

* -- Those to which reference has been made in this Thesis.

** -- Those to which the writer has referred most often and which he studied thoroughly in preparation for this Thesis.